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INFO RUCNCLS/ALL SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA COLLECTIVE
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RUCNIRA/IRAN COLLECTIVE
RUEHAK/AMEMBASSY ANKARA 5441
RUEHDE/AMCONSUL DUBAI 0103
RUEHIT/AMCONSUL ISTANBUL 3685
RHMCSUU/CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ASHGABAT 000897

SIPDIS

STATE FOR NEA/IR AND SCA/CEN

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TAGS: [IR](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [TX](#)

SUBJECT: IRAN/TURKMENISTAN: IRANIAN COMPANY MANAGER SAYS
"REACH OUT TO THE OPPOSITION"

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Classified By: Charge Richard Miles. Reasons 1.4(b) and (d)

11. (C) In a July 14 conversation with Iran Watcher, the general manager of the Ashgabat branch of Iran Samen said that the U.S. needs to focus on reaching out to the "more than 20 million Iranians who voted for Mir-Hussein Mousavi." Gholamreza Gieahpour, who has headed the office since 1996. He also said that "there is nothing that Ahmadinejad would love more" than for the Obama administration to initiate talks with him, now that the Iranian authorities have declared him the victor following Iran's June 12 presidential election. He called Ahmadinejad "untrustworthy", opining that he cannot be relied upon to stand by any commitments he might make in future bilateral talks with the United States.

VISA TROUBLES

12. (C) Gieahpour said that he has renewed his visa yearly since he began working out of Ashgabat 14 years ago, each time receiving a 12-month extension. Last week, however, when he submitted a visa renewal application to the State Migration Service, he was told that, "given the circumstances and instability in your country," his visa would be for only six months this time. It was unclear how long the visa renewal will take this time, so Gieahpour is unable to travel to Iran to visit his family until the process is completed.

PEOPLE WANT A REVOTE

13. (C) He said that, "like so many others," he is "indescribably disappointed" with the way the election occurred in Iran: "I cannot bear to turn on the Iranian (state) news channels anymore. I used to rely on VOA's Persian service, but that is now inaccessible here. (NOTE: Iranians and other Farsi-speakers in Turkmenistan report that they, too, are currently unable to receive VOA's Persian service here. END NOTE). Lately, he said, he relies only on foreign websites in Persian, such as BBC's, for news from home. He said that in conversations with other expat Iranians in Turkmenistan, as well as friends from Tehran who

visited recently, Iranians who voted for Mousavi are "not about" to give in to what they view as the "hijacking" of their votes in the election. He said that they will accept nothing less than the invalidation of the election results and a revote. Others, he said, have resigned themselves to believing that "foreign intervention" is their only hope for achieving democracy in Iran. "They believe the leadership will never relinquish power and have to be removed by force, just like Saddam was," he explained.

POLITICAL SANCTIONS

¶4. (C) Gieahpour said that, in his view, the international community, including both Russia and China, need to exert pressure on the Iranian government to respect the "will of the people," and that absent that, European and other diplomatic missions need to impose "political sanctions" by scaling back their diplomatic presence in Tehran and requiring that Iran do the same. He particularly emphasized that, "As soon as all the Iranian diplomats based in Europe learn that they will be sent home and that their children can no longer attend elite schools and colleges in Europe, the message will get through."

INVITE RECALL NOT WELL-RECEIVED

¶5. (C) Gieahpour, an acquaintance of Iran's ambassador to Turkmenistan, Mohamad-Reza Forqani, said that Forqani was "very disapointed" that the U.S. government had recalled the invitations that he and other diplomats had previously received for the Embassy's 4th of July reception. He said that, regardless of the political considerations that may have led the United States to retract the invitation, that it

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was "particularly insulting," violating traditional and accepted Iranian notions of politeness and hospitality. He noted that officials at Forqani's level likely "wouldn't have a clue" as to how the Iranian authorities allegedly "stole" the election, that only the highest echelons of the government would have details about how it was actually carried out.

¶6. (C) COMMENT: Our interlocutor, perhaps like so many other Iranians, has devoted his career to business interests and, prior to the presidential election, had minimal interest in Iranian politics. He said that he had very high hopes for change in Iran before the June election, and described himself as being almost "despondent" lately. He recounted how, since he has not been watching any Iranian television broadcasts, he completely overlooked the feast of Hezrat Fatima (daughter of the Prophet Mohammed), when Iranians traditionally buy flowers and celebrate with close female relatives. This year, for the first time, he forgot to call his mother to congratulate her. END COMMENT
MILES